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THE NEW MUTANTS™

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THUNDER WAKES HER-- SO LOUD IT SHAKES THE HOUSE.

IT'S ONLY A STORM -- NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE SO FIERCE, EVEN BACK HOME IN COLORADO, IN MY MOUNTAINS.

I WONDER IF ANYONE ELSE ELSE IS UP. I COULD USE SOME COMPANY.

WHAT'S THAT!?!

A FACE -- IN THE WINDOW!

IT WAS THE MONSTER THAT ATTACKED ME IN THE ***DANGER ROOM,**** I'M SURE OF IT. HAS IT COME BACK TO FINISH THE JOB?!

*LAST ISSUE--L.

NOTHING. NO SIGN OF IT. BUT HOW COULD ANYTHING SO BIG MOVE SO FAST-- OR HIDE SO WELL?

WAS IT EVEN HERE AT ALL?

I'VE BEEN ON EDGE FOR DAYS.

MAYBE I IMAGINED THINGS JUST NOW. MAYBE I'VE BEEN IMAGINING THEM ALL ALONG.

MY MUTANT POWER IS THE ABILITY TO PULL PEOPLE'S WORST FEAR FROM THEIR SOUL AND MAKE THEM APPEAR TO BE REAL. I CAN'T CONTROL IT. THAT'S WHY MY GRANDFATHER SENT ME HERE TO ***PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL,*** SO I COULD LEARN. BUT SUPPOSE MY POWER'S TURNED AGAINST ME...

...USING MY ***OWN*** SECRET TERRORS TO DESTROY ME?!

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Stan Lee PRESENTS...

NIGHTMARE

STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS!

IF THAT IS SO, DANIELLE MOONSTAR, THEN SURELY YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR...

...FOR A PHANTOM-- A SPIRIT-FORM -- CANNOT HARM YOU.

YYIIII!!

CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER/CO-CREATOR / BOB McLEOD PENCILLER MIKE GUSTOVICH INKER

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LOUISE JONES, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

NOTE: THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BETWEEN ISSUES # 166 & 167 OF THE X-MEN--LOUISE.

IT GRABBED ME--IT'S *SOLID*--THAT MEANS MY KNIFE CAN HURT *IT!*

I STABBED WITH ALL MY STRENGTH, BUT IT'S STILL COMING!

I'VE GOT TO WARN THE OTHERS! MAYBE OUR COMBINED POWERS CAN STOP IT!

ROBERTO, SHAN--*PROFESSOR XAVIER*--EVERYONE, *GET UP!*

THERE'S A *MONSTER* IN THE HOUSE!

SHE SLAMS HER OWN DOOR BEHIND HER, TO SLOW THE CREATURE DOWN, AND RACES DOWN THE HALL, EXPECTING EVERY MOMENT TO SMELL ITS FETID, CHARNAL HOUSE BREATH, TO FEEL ITS FANGS TEARING AT HER THROAT.

SHE'S NEVER FELT SO SCARED.

AND WITH GOOD REASON, AS SHE FINDS HER FELLOW STUDENTS...

ROBERTO da COSTA.

XI'AN COY MANH.

SAM GUTHRIE.

RAHNE SINCLAIR.

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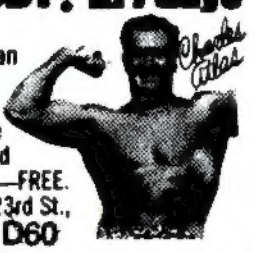

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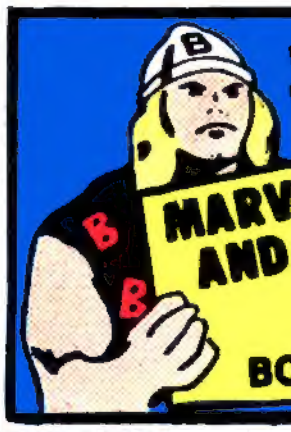

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Hey kid what d'ya want?

YUM

You want gum? Is that it?

YUM

How 'bout uh....

Bubble Yum

Bubble Yum

Bubble Yum

Bubble Yum. It says...'Super Yum'. Must be new, huh?

Hmm. Think I'll try a piece for you.

MMM.

MMM!

YUMM!

Super Yum

Bubble Yum

Bubble Yum Bubble Gum. It's a Super Yum.

Told ya.

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MARVELLOUS SIGHTS, ARE THEY NOT? ALL SLAIN BY THEIR MOST PRIMAL FEAR, OR MOST ANGUISHED MEMORY. AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE.

THE MONSTER! IF I CAN REACH RAHNE'S WINDOW-- IT'S A TWO STORY DROP BUT I'VE SURVIVED WORSE...

IT WAS TOO FAST! IT CAUGHT ME!

WHY STRUGGLE, LITTLE CHEYENNE?

IT'S -- CRUSHING ME -- HURTS SO MUCH -- BUT I WON'T GIVE UP!

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM ONE WHO KNOWS YOUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS.

HER FLAILING HANDS CATCH AT THE CREATURE'S MASK. SHE YANKS, AND...

SURPRISED, DANIELLE?

CAN IT BE THAT, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ME?

BY THE GREAT SPIRIT--

--THE BEAR WHO MURDERED MY PARENTS -- COME AT LAST TO KILL ME, TOO!

NO!!

M-MY ROOM-- MY... BED-- ME! I'M ALL RIGHT!

THE SKY OUTSIDE -- IT'S CLEAR-- WHERE'S THE STORM?!

SAM! ROBERTO!! YOU'RE ALIVE!!

HUH?!? WHY SHOULDN'T WE BE?

WE HEARD YOU SCREAM, DANI! WHAT HAPPENED?! WHAT'S WRONG?!

I DON'T KNOW, 'BERTO. I THINK... I THINK I'M LOSING MY MIND!

SOON...

I THOUGHT MY UNCLE JOAO TOLD SCARY GHOST STORIES, BUT COMPARED TO YOU, DANI, HE'S AN AMATEUR.

GRRRR!

IS DANIELLE ILL, PROFESSOR?

NOT PHYSICALLY, RAHNE. PULSE AND RESPIRATION ARE NORMAL AND I'LL WAGER HER TEMPERATURE IS THE SAME.

WHAT ABOUT MY MIND, PROFESSOR?!

AM I GOING *CRAZY?!?*

HEY, KID, DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.

SAM IS RIGHT. YOU HAD A BAD DREAM...

BUT IT SEEMED SO *REAL!*

LOOK AROUND YOU. EVERYONE IS ALIVE AND WELL. NOTHING HAPPENED.

NOW TRY TO GET SOME REST. WE'LL TALK FURTHER IN THE MORNING.

SHE DOES HER BEST TO FOLLOW XAVIER'S ADVICE, BUT SLEEP ELUDES HER. SHE TELLS HERSELF SHE'S SAFE, THAT THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR-- BUT SHE DOESN'T BELIEVE IT.

I BET PROFESSOR XAVIER THINKS I IMAGINED THE DANGER ROOM MONSTER, TOO. AND THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN THERE WAS MY OWN FAULT FOR BREAKING THE RULES AND GOING IN BY MYSELF.

HE'S WRONG! SOMEONE TRIED TO KILL ME, I'M SURE OF IT!

AND I FIGURE THE DREAM MEANS THEY'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE UP.

IF THEY COME FOR ME TONIGHT, I'D BETTER BE READY FOR THEM.

MY *KNIFE--!*

THAT GUNK ON THE BLADE-- IT MUST HAVE COME FROM THE BEAR-CREATURE, WHEN I STABBED HIM. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, BUT-- DREAM OR NO DREAM--

--HE *EXISTS!*

PROFESSOR!
MY GOSH, I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM-- WARN HIM-- AND THE OTHERS!

I'M THE ONE HE WANTS, BUT SO LONG AS I'M IN THIS HOUSE, A PART OF THE NEW MUTANTS...
... ALL OF US ARE IN DANGER!

IF ONLY I KNEW WHY! WHAT MAKES ME SO SPECIAL?!
THE LIGHT'S ON IN THE PROFESSOR'S STUDY-- HE'S STILL UP-- GREAT! Uh-oh-- SOUNDS LIKE HE'S ON THE PHONE...
MY APOLOGIES FOR CALLING AT SUCH AN UNGODLY HOUR, MOIRA.

HE'S SPEAKING TO Dr. MacTAGGERT, HIS ASSOCIATE. SHE ISN'T A MUTANT, LIKE THE PROFESSOR AND US, BUT SHE'S ALMOST AS SMART AS HE IS. SHE'S A REAL NICE LADY, TOO.
SHE LIVES IN SCOTLAND. IT MUST BE A LOUSY CONNECTION-- THE PROFESSOR'S YELLING-- THAT'S HOW COME I CAN HEAR HIM.

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT DANIELLE MOONSTAR. HER RECENT BEHAVIOR INDICATES MARKED-- AND, I FEAR, INCREASING-- PSYCHOPATHIC TENDENCIES.
HUH?!?
EXTREME PARANOIA... SCHIZOPHRENIA... ADVANCED, POSSIBLY BEYOND MY ABILITY TO COPE...

NO.
SPIRITS OF MY ANCESTORS PROTECT ME-- NO!!

HE THINKS I'M INSANE.

MAYBE I AM.
MY MUTANT POWER NEVER SHOWS ANYTHING GOOD-- MAYBE BECAUSE I DON'T WANT IT TO. MAYBE I SHOW THE WICKED, EVIL, HURTFUL SIDES OF PEOPLE BECAUSE I'M WICKED AND HURTFUL-- AND EVIL.
IF THAT'S TRUE, I DON'T WANT-- I SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED-- TO LIVE.

MEANWHILE, AN OCEAN AWAY, IN HER MUIR ISLE LAB...

I HAVE NE'ER HEARD SUCH UNADULTERATED RUBBISH IN MY LIFE. THE CHILD HAS NAE HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS. SHE CHECKED OUT FINE WHEN I EXAMINED HER LAST SUMMER.

THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, MOIRA.

NONSENSE. WHAT ABOUT A DIRECT MIND-SCAN? YOU'RE THE TELEPATH, MAN, NOT I. HAVE YOU NO' PEERED INSIDE HER BRAIN, T' CONFIRM YUIR DIAGNOSIS?

NO... NOT YET.

THEN BOTHER ME WHEN YOU'VE DONE SO!

YE'RE ON A SHORT FUSE T'DAY, DARLIN'.

THAT MAN CAN BE SO EXASPERATING!

IF HE'S TRULY WORRIED, HE SHOULD HA' MIND-SCANNED DANI FIRST THING. T' RING ME AS HE DID-- T' THEN TALK AS HE DID-- IT'S NA' LIKE HIM.

YE WERE A BIT HARD ON HIM, THOUGH, DON'T YE THINK?

AYE. P'RHAPS I WAS.

IT'S THE BOY, ISN'T IT?

AYE. THE SON CHARLIE DOES NA' KNOW HE HAS. THE SON HE AN' I DREAMED OF WHEN WE WERE IN LOVE.

I REMEMBER MY OWN CHILD, SEAN, ALSO A MUTANT-- BUT SO INSANE AN' EVIL THAT I AN' THE X-MEN WERE FORCED EVENTUALLY T' DESTROY HIM.

WHY ME? WHY COULD NA' MY BABE HA' BEEN THE JOY THAT CHARLEY'S MAY YET BE?! AN WHY MUST I BE THE ONE T' SAVE HIM?!!

'TIS NA' FAIR, SEAN.

THEN MARRY ME, MOIRA, AN' LET'S HAVE SONS AN' DAUGHTERS OF OUR OWN!

SUPPOSE THEY'RE MONSTERS, LIKE PROTEUS?

HE WAS CONCEIVED IN AN ACT OF VIOLENCE AN' HATRED. OURS'LL COME FROM LOVE. THEY'LL BE BEAUTIFUL.

I LOVE YOU, SEAN. I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT...

"... BUT I DARE NOT TAKE THE RISK."

JOE MacTAGGERT, WERE YE NOT ALREADY DEAD, I'D KILL YE NOW-- F'R WHAT YE DID T' MOIRA.

WHO'S THAT ON THE PROMONTORY?

ILLYANA RASPUTIN-- COLOSSUS' YOUNGER SISTER-- MOIRA'S LOOKIN' AFTER HER WHILE CHARLES INTRODUCES THE NEW MUTANTS TO HIS SCHOOL.

WHAT'S SHE SINGIN'-- SOME SORT O' PRAYER?

WHEREVER YOUR SOUL WANDERS, CAT, MAY YOU FIND THE PEACE AND HAPPINESS YOU HUNGERED FOR.

BE WELL, BELOVED FRIENDS. MAY THE GREAT ONE GRANT THAT I PROVE WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST. AND SACRIFICE.

OH! H'LO, BANSHEE. I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE WAS AROUND.

THE FAULT'S MINE, F'R DISTURBIN' YE.

'S'OKAY. NO HARM DONE.

IT SOUNDED LOVELY, ILLYANA.

MY SONG? THANKS--ORORO TAUGHT IT TO ME. I PROMISED MY BEST FRIEND I'D HONOR HER MEMORY ON HER BIRTHDAY AND THIS SEEMED THE BEST WAY TO DO IT.

AS I RECALL, T'DAY'S *KITTY PRYDE'S* BIRTHDAY-- IS THAT WHO ILLYANA MEANS?

YE SHOULDN'T FRET, CHILD. TRUE, THE X-MEN HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY ALIENS, BUT THEY'VE SURVIVED WORSE SCRAPES.

THEY'LL BE HOME SAFE N' SOUND, YE'LL SEE.

I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT HERE AND NOW, Mr. CASSIDY, BUT OF THE DAEMONIC LIMBO THAT WAS MY HOME FOR HALF MY LIFE.

AND OF THE CREATURE WHO RULED IT... AND ME: *BELASCO*.

THE *X-MEN* WERE THERE, TOO. SOME DIED AT BELASCO'S HAND.

SOME DIED AT *MINE*.

MORNING...

SPLASH!

THE POOL IS OLYMPIC-SIZED-- 25 METERS LONG -- AND DANI DOES TEN LAPS, AS SHE DOES EVERY MORNING SHE'S HOME.

BECAUSE OF THE EARLY HOUR, SHE'S USUALLY ALONE WHEN SHE SWIMS.

TODAY'S AN EXCEPTION.

SHAN -- HI!

HERE. TOWEL YOURSELF OFF BEFORE YOU CATCH YOUR DEATH.

HOW CAN YOU STAND IT, DANI? THE WATER MUST BE FREEZING.

NO, ACTUALLY IT'S KIND OF NICE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE RIDICULOUSLY WARM WEATHER WE'VE BEEN HAVING. IN MY MOUNTAINS, THIS TIME OF YEAR, THERE'S SNOW ON THE GROUND. HERE, IT'S LIKE SUMMER.

NOT TO ME.

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT.

ALSO, THE COLD CLEARS THE COBWEBS FROM MY SKULL, HELPS ME THINK.

I'VE HAD A LOT TO THINK ABOUT, LATELY.

THE PROF THINKS I'M LOONEY.

ARE YOU?

I'M SCARED, SHAN.

EVER SINCE I ARRIVED, SOMEONE -- SOMETHING -- HAS BEEN OUT TO GET ME. FIRST, I FIGURED THE IDEA WAS TO DRIVE ME AWAY, MAKE ME QUIT THE NEW MUTANTS. WHEN I DIDN'T, THINGS GOT SERIOUS.

MY LIFE'S ON THE LINE, SHAN -- AND I HAVE A HORRIBLE FEELING THE PROFESSOR'S INVOLVED.

LATER, IN THE DANGER ROOM...

WHUMP!

SSHHHHHHHH

HOW DO YOU FEEL, CANNONBALL?

AH THOUGHT AH WAS INVULNERABLE WHEN AH BLASTED. GUESS AH WAS WRONG.

DID AH HIT HARD?

THE READINGS WENT OFF THEIR SCALES.

LET'S CONTINUE WITH WORK ON YOUR ABILITY TO SHIFT ANGULAR VECTORS IN FLIGHT. FLY THIS HOOP SLALOM.

TAKE YOUR TIME, LAD. ACCURACY IS CRITICAL IN THIS EXERCISE, NOT SPEED.

AH'M... TRYIN', SIR!

AS HE PASSES THROUGH THE FIRST GATE, SAM FOCUSES ALL HIS CONCENTRATION IN AN ATTEMPT TO ALTER COURSE TOWARDS THE SECOND.

HE FEELS THE SLIGHTEST OF CHANGE -- BUT TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

KRAANG

OUCH!

I'M GLAD I MEASURED THE BOY'S ABILITY TO TAKE PUNISHMENT BEFORE BEGINNING HIS TRAINING REGIMEN.

EVIDENTLY, A MINIMUM SPEED IS NECESSARY FOR SAM TO MAINTAIN FLIGHT. I'LL HAVE TO RE-SPACE THE HOOPS TO ACCOMODATE THAT.

CANNON-BALL...?

STILL OKAY, SIR. TH' ONLY THING THAT'S BUSTED IS MY PRIDE. AH FEEL LIKE A JERK.

SO HAS EVERY STUDENT, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER.

LET US BEGIN AGAIN.

EVENTUALLY, SAM'S ORDEAL COMES TO AN END.

COMPARED T' THIS, WORKIN' IN THE MINES WAS A BREEZE.

AH'VE NEVER FELT SO BEAT, AN' ACCORDIN' TO THE PROF...

...IT'LL GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER -- HUH?!?

THE LATHER'S -- COLD! WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?!

ON THE MIRROR -- DID I WRITE THAT?!

AH MUST HAVE, BUT HOW COME AH DON'T REMEMBER DOIN' IT?!

HELP US IN THE BOAT-HOUSE

AH BLACKED OUT.

ONLY ONE OF US CAN MAKE PEOPLE DO THAT. AH DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S PLAYIN' AT, BUT WHEN AH CATCH UP WITH HER...

...SHE'S GONNA REGRET IT!

SHAN!!

YOU MAY BE THE OLDEST AN' YOU MAY BE THE BOSS O' THIS TEAM...

--BUT NO WAY DOES THAT GIVE YOU TH' RIGHT T' GO MUCKIN' ABOUT WITH MY MIND! AH THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS!

JOIN THE CLUB, SAM. SHE DID THE SAME TO ME AND RAHNE, TOO.

DON'T YELL AT SHAN, GUYS; IT ISN'T HER FAULT. I ASKED HER TO POSSESS YOU, TO GET US ALL TOGETHER AS QUICKLY AND QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE.

WHY, DANI?

ONCE AGAIN, DANI TELLS HER STORY...

... WHEN I HEARD THE PROFESSOR TELL Dr. MacTAGGERT I WAS CRAZY, I FELT SO LOUSY I WANTED TO DIE-- BUT I BEGAN THINKING INSTEAD.

THE STAINS ON MY KNIFE MEANT I'D STABBED SOMETHING DURING THE NIGHT. AND IF THAT PART OF THE DREAM WAS REAL, WHY NOT THE REST?

WE S'POSED TO BE GHOSTS, THEN?

SAM, WON'T YOU ADMIT EVEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT I'M RIGHT, THAT SOMEBODY WANTS TO GET RID OF ME, ANY WAY THEY CAN?

WHY SHOULD I? GIMME A REASON, GIRL!

YOU CAN'T-- BECAUSE THERE ISN'T ANY. IF XAVIER WANTS YOU OUTTA HERE, LIKE YOU'RE HINTING, WHY DOESN'T HE SIMPLY EXPEL YOU?

HE'S A ***DOCTOR***, DANI. IF HE SAYS YOU'RE SICK, COULD BE HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKIN' ABOUT.

HOLY COW !!!

ON TH' OTHER HAND...

SAM, WHAT'S WRONG?! WHAT DID YOU SEE?!?

YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW.

SLAM

MON DIEU!

C'EST FANTASTIQUE! C'EST ***IMPOSSIBLE!***

'T'IS NA' REAL...

...IS IT?

SMELL THE AIR-- IT'S ***AWFUL!***

WHAT NOW, MI AMIGOS?

PROFESSOR XAVIER IS IN THE HOUSE, ALL ALONE!

HOW CAN WE REACH HIM?! ILLUSION OR NO, THAT ALIEN LANDSCAPE MASQUES THE HOUSE. IF WE TRY TO CROSS THE LAWN, WE ARE SURE TO GET LOST!

FOR ALL WE KNOW, WE'RE NOT EVEN ON EARTH. SUPPOSE WE'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED?!

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.

IT'S DARK, DANI. I DINNA LIKE IT. I'M FRIGHTENED!

THAT MAKES TWO OF US, KIDDO.

WHAT'S DOWN THERE?

THE ESTATE'S HONEY-COMBED WITH TUNNELS, LEADING FROM UNDER-NEATH THE MANSION TO ALL SORTS OF NEAT PLACES. I'VE BEEN EXPLORING THEM.

DIDN'T THE PROFESSOR SAY THEY WERE OFF-LIMITS TO US?

YUP.

WHAT IF IT'S CHANGED, TOO?

SAM, XAVIER MAY BE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS, OR A VICTIM, JUST LIKE US-- EITHER WAY, WE'VE GOT TO GET TO HIM. IF ANYONE HAS A BETTER IDEA, FINE. OTHERWISE, FOLLOW ME.

IT LOOKS NORMAL. C'MON, GUYS, THE COAST IS CLE--

EEEEEYOW!

DANI!

THAT AIN'T REAL, IT CAN'T BE! I'M SEEIN' THINGS!

N-NO!

THIS IS THE MONSTER THAT AMBUSHED ME IN THE DANGER ROOM!

YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR MY POWER, HATCHLINGS. LEAVE THIS ONE TO ME--

--AND I WILL LEAVE YOU YOUR LIVES.

NEVER!

SHAN TRIES TO POSSESS THE CREATURE...

...BUT, TO HER HORROR...

ITS THOUGHTS, THE VERY FIBER OF ITS BEING--SO ALIEN, SO ...EVIL! IT IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!

WITH A SHRIEK, SHE BREAKS CONTACT.

YOU'VE CAUSED ME A LOT OF GRIEF, UGLY. I INTEND TO RETURN THE COMPLIMENT --WITH INTEREST--HUH?!?

NOTHING'S HAPPENING! I CAN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH YOUR MIND-- TO SUMMON MY SPIRIT-FORMS!

WHAT A PITY, LITTLE HUMAN, FOR THAT MEANS YOU ARE QUITE HELPLESS!

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY, DEMON!

THE NEW MUTANTS SAY DIFFERENT!

WOLFSBANE HAS NEVER FELT MORE SCARED--

--BUT SHE DOESN'T LET THAT STOP HER.

YAHR!

PAIN-- BUT THAT CANNOT BE!

WHADDAYA KNOW-- WE SURPRISED THE BOZO! C'MON, BOBBY-- LET'S NAIL UGLY WHILE ITS STILL OFF-BALANCE!

SAM IGNITES HIS POWER...

...THE BACKLASH OF HIS BLAST ASSAILING FRIENDS AND FOE ALIKE AS HE ROCKETS DOWN THE TUNNEL.

THE SIGHT IS IMPRESSIVE...

...THE IMPACT MORE SO.

YIPE!?!

UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS...

THIS IS CRAZY!

SAM, YOU WERE DEAD ON TARGET, I-- WE-- SAW YOU!

BUT THERE'S NO BODY. THE MONSTER DISAPPEARED!

GOOD RIDDANCE. IT WAS DISGUSTING.

MAYBE IT DISINTEGRATED. MONSTERS DO THAT ON T.V.

BRILLIANT. MAYBE THEY BEAMED UP TO THE "*ENTERPRISE.*"

DANIELLE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH. SURE. THANKS.

EXCEPT FOR THIS LOUSY HEADACHE. MY SKULL FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO BURST.

LOOK!!

THE TUNNEL-- IT'S *CHANGED!*

I WISH I'D PAID MORE ATTENTION IN BIOLOGY CLASS-- BUT I'M ALMOST CERTAIN THAT TUNNEL IS FORMED OF ORGANIC MATTER. WE COULD BE INSIDE A LIVING ORGANISM.

LIKE JONAH AN' TH' WHALE?

EV'RYTHING'S STILL NORMAL BEHIND US.

CAN WE NO' RUN AWAY?

WE COULD FLEE THE CREATURE, BUT HOW COULD WE EVER ESCAPE THE MEMORY THAT WE HAD DESERTED PROFESSOR XAVIER?

BUT, ROBERTO, SUPPOSE... *WE* BEGIN TO CHANGE?

I'VE BEEN TRYING NOT TO THINK ABOUT THAT.

COME ON, LET'S GO. I'LL LEAD. YOU HOLD MY HAND.

WHAT A MESS! THE CLOSER WE COME TO THE MANSION, THE MORE COMPLETE THE METAMORPHOSIS BECOMES. THE MANSION MUST BE ITS SOURCE.

INTERESTING, HOW THIS CONFORMS TO THE BASIC LAYOUT OF THE HOUSE. IT REMINDS ME OF THE DANGER ROOM -- CONSTRUCTING AN ILLUSION OF REALITY AROUND A REAL FRAME.

WHAT I BIT WAS NO ILLUSION, SHAN-- ICCHHH!

I WONDER IF WE ARE FACING MERELY A SINGLE OPPONENT? WE NUMBER BUT FIVE AND, FOR ALL OUR TALENTS, ARE YOUNG AND UNTRAINED. WHY HAS NOT THE MONSTER OVERWHELMED US? PERHAPS IT IS NOT SO FORMIDABLE AS IT APPEARS.

ROBERTO-- THAT TENTACLE!

SO MUCH FOR YOUR THEORY, SHAN!

WHULLLLP!!

HANG ON! I'LL SAVE YOU!

BEFORE RAHNE CAN DO SO, HOWEVER ...

... ROBERTO TAKES MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS...

...UNLEASHING SOLAR ENERGY STORED WITHIN HIS BODY TO TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO A SUPER-STRONG POWERHOUSE.

A FEW SECONDS AFTER THAT, SUNSPOT IS FREE.

THEN, WITHOUT WARNING...
HIT THE DECK, PEOPLE! THE MONSTER--!
IT CAN FLY!
NO!!
DANI, LOOK OUT!
AW, CRIPES! IT BROUGHT COMPANY!
CAN'T-- BREAK FREE! BUT I'VE GOT TO-- MY FRIENDS... IN DANGER-- MY MIND! IT'S BURNING-- HURTS SO MUCH...
AAAAAAAAAAA
SHE SCREAMS HER THROAT RAW...
... AND WAKES WITH ITS ECHO IN HER EARS...
... THE AFTER-IMAGE OF WHITE-HOT, UN-ENDURABLE AGONY IN HER MIND.
BUT BAD AS THOSE MOMENTS WERE, HER CURRENT PREDICAMENT IS FAR WORSE.
THE DEMON'S WRAPPED ME UP...
... AS A SPIDER DOES ITS PREY.
M-MY THOUGHTS--!
ARE AN OPEN BOOK TO ME, HATCHLING.
SO H-HOW COME YOU HAVEN'T KILLED ME? YOU SURE TRIED HARD ENOUGH IN THE DANGER ROOM.
TRUE, BUT I'VE HAD A BETTER IDEA. BEHOLD THE FATE I HAVE PREPARED FOR YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS!

REVERED ANCESTORS...!

A ROYAL EGG WILL BE IMPLANTED WITHIN EACH OF YOU. WHEN IT HATCHES...

...YOU WILL BE TRANSFORMED INTO YOUNG QUEENS OF THE **BROOD**. TOGETHER, WE WILL CONQUER YOUR WORLD, ENSLAVE YOUR RACE, AND TAKE OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG THE STARS! A GLORIOUS DESTINY, IS IT NOT?

OWW! Oh, BROTHER, GREAT TIME FOR ANOTHER HEADACHE-- HEY, WAITAMINNIT! I GET THESE SAME TWINGES WHENEVER I USE MY POWER!

AND YOU'VE BEEN DOING SO QUITE A BIT TODAY.

NO I HAVEN'T, UNLESS-- *YOU'VE* BEEN *MAKING* ME!

GET OUT OF MY MIND, DEMON!

IT'S NO USE. I SENSE THE CREATURE NOW-- ITS NOT HIDING ANY-MORE-- BUT I CAN'T BUDGE IT. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN A PART OF ME? HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ITS PUPPET?!

IT ISN'T JUST CREATING SPIRIT-FORMS, THOUGH. EVERYTHING WE'VE FACED HAS BEEN REAL! I CAN'T DO THAT.

NOT YET, BUT I'VE BEEN AUGMENTING YOUR POWERS WITH MY OWN, FULFILL-ING YOUR ULTIMATE, AND CONSIDERABLE, POTENTIAL-- WHICH YOU YOURSELF WOULD HAVE DONE, AS AN ADULT, GIVEN TIME AND TRAINING.

IRONIC, IS IT NOT? THE THINGS YOU'VE SEEN AND FOUGHT-- THE BEAR, THE TUNNEL, EVEN ME--

-- HAVE IN A SENSE ALL BEEN YOUR OWN CREATION.

WE'VE FOUND 'EM!

NOW, MONSTER, IT IS *YOUR* TURN!

THIS IS PROFESSOR XAVIER'S STUDY-- BUT WHERE IS HE?! WHAT HAS THE DEMON DONE WITH HIM?!

LET'S TRASH THE SUCKER FIRST, BOBBY, THEN WE'LL MAKE IT TALK.

THEY HAVEN'T A PRAYER, SO LONG AS THE ALIEN CAN USE ME TO CREATE ANY SETTING OR MONSTER IT WANTS. BUT MAYBE THAT'S ITS WEAK SPOT.

WITHOUT MY POWER TO SUSTAIN IT, EVEN THE ALIEN WILL CEASE TO EXIST!

SHAN-- DON'T QUESTION OR ARGUE-- JUST *POSSESS* ME! *NOW!*

AN INSPIRED MOVE-- BUT IT BACKFIRES. AS SHAN ESTABLISHES A MIND-LINK WITH DANI...

THE BROODQUEEN REACHES ACROSS THE LINK--

--SLASHING THROUGH SHAN'S NATURAL PSYCHIC DEFENSES AS IF THEY DIDN'T EXIST--TO SEIZE CONTROL OF HER MIND.

HEY--!?!

FORGIVE ME, SHAN, I WOULD MUCH RATHER BE DOING THIS-- AND WORSE--

WHOULFF!

--TO THE DEMON WHO POSSESSED YOU!

SAM, WHERE IS IT? WHERE DID IT GO?

DARNED IF AH KNOW, BOBBY. AH SLAMMED IT INTO THE WALL, HARD AS AH COULD--

--AN' IT VANISHED, LIKE IT DID BACK IN THE TUNNEL.

FEAR NOT, MUTANTS, I AM NEVER FAR FROM YOU.

STRIKE ME DOWN ONCE--OR A MILLION TIMES--AND I WILL YET RISE, AS STRONG AS EVER.

IT GRABBED RAHNE!

MAKE A MOVE TOWARDS HER, CANNONBALL, AND I'LL FEAST ON YOUR LIVING HEART!

MY HEAD'S THROBBING--THE ALIEN'S DRAWING ON MORE OF MY POWER--I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS! AND NEITHER CAN THE OTHERS! THE ALIEN'S WINNING!

SAM, *I'M* THE KEY! KAYO ME, AND THE ALIEN'LL DISAPPEAR FOR GOOD! IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE!

STOP!

AH DON'T KNOW WHAT DANI'S TALKIN' ABOUT, BUT FROM THE DEMON'S REACTION...

... SHE MUST HAVE THE RIGHT IDEA.

KRAK!

SORRY ABOUT THIS, KID.

HOLY COW, DANI WAS RIGHT!

WAS ALL OF THIS *HER* FAULT? SOMETHIN' SHE CREATED OUTTA HER CRAZINESS?!?

NON, SAM. WHEN I TRIED TO POSSESS HER, I SENSED A TRULY ALIEN--INHUMAN AND CONSUMMATELY EVIL--PRESENCE WITHIN HER. SHE WAS AS MUCH A VICTIM AS THE REST OF US.

QUICKLY, WE MUST GET DANI TO THE INFIRMARY. I KNOW YOU TRIED TO PULL YOUR PUNCH, SAM--

--BUT THE IMPACT STILL MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE.

MUTANTS, EXPLAIN YOURSELVES ?! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

PROFESSOR XAVIER!! TALK FAST, SOMEONE. I THINK WE ARE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.

BULLPEN BULLETINS

GOOD MORNING, AFTERNOON, OR EVENING AS THE CASE MAY BE!

Welcome to my first-ever *interview* in this column. I'm asking questions of the man who has more copies of his work in print than any other human being in the history of the world, Marvel super-pro inker, *Vince Colletta.*

J.S.: *Let's see... you've been inking since 1950, and you're very fast and prolific... so, including international reprints of your comics and your newspaper strip work, I figure that your copies-in-print total goes well into the* billions.

Vince: Yeah... well, I never had a day without work... and I never had to ask for a single one of those jobs.

J.S.: *You know you've made it when editors come to you with jobs.*

Vince: I never let an editor down... I never let a company down. I always give my best work and on time.

J.S.: *Back in the days when Marvel ran polls wherein the readers voted for their favorite writers and artists, you often finished first or second against* impressive *competition. You must have been doing great work. I always liked your stuff — especialy those issues of* Thor *you inked back in the 1960's!*

Vince: Thanks.

J.S.: *Has anyone ever told you that you look like a Mafia Boss?*

Vince: Back when Stan Lee was doing your job he once printed photos of all the artists in the comics one month. After he saw how my picture came out he called me up and asked me to come back and get another picture taken. He thought I looked too much like a gangster. He didn't want me to scare the kids... or their parents.

J.S., *Is it true that you know the guy who played* Columbo *— Peter Falk?*

Vince: I met him back when I had a photography studio, besides inking comics. Because I photographed a lot of actors, actresses, and beautiful models for magazines and for their portfolios, I met a lot of people who became famous — like George Maharis, James Farrantino...

J.S.: *You're known for your beautiful women... inking wise, I mean. Everybody says that you're one of the best for inking strips featuring female characters. I guess photographing all of those models and actresses helped.*

Vince: Yeah.

J.S.: *What's your philosophy about inking?*

Vince: Well, first of all, some inkers like to pick and choose... they'll only do certain jobs over certain pencilers... and they'll take their time, no matter what the deadline is, even if the editor is in a jam, or a colorist is waiting for pages to come in so they can earn a living, too. I can't be that way. I like to feel that I'm part of the team, and we're all in the game together. If the editor asks me to ink a story by, say, a young, inexperienced penciler who still has some rough edges to his work, I'll *do* it and I'll do the best I can. It might not come out quite as good as a job that I'd inked over by John Buscema... it *can't.* No way. But, I'd rather give it a try to help out the new guy, the editor, and the team than pick and choose jobs that will make me look good.

J.S.: *Explain how the pencils affect the way the inking comes out.*

Vince: The readers only see the *ink.* All the pencil lines are covered by the inker's inklines. Once the book is printed, no one can tell what the pencil drawings looked like before the inker inked them. They might have given you a tightly rendered face, for instance, or maybe just an oval shape with smudges about where the eyes and mouth go. If he gives you precise drawing, the finished, inked head will look like the penciler's style. If he gives you an oval, you're really getting the inker's drawing.

J.S.: *It's up to the editor to make sure that the penciler has held up his end. Still, I know, that in a story which might have 150 separate panels, even the best pencilers might blow a few panels.*

Vince: I think the inker should follow the penciler's style and try to make it come through. A lot of inkers these days overpower the pencils, though. The penciler just gives them a framework and the inkers take over from there. That's okay if it's what the penciler and the editor want.

J.S.: *Sometimes it is. Frank Miller worked that way with Klaus Johnson on* Daredevil *for a while... and Walt Simonson did it with Tom Palmer on* Star Wars, *too. They really sort of stopped being penciler/inker teams and kind of melded together. Unless guys are working on that kind of basis, though, I think I agree with you — the penciler should bear primary responsibility.*

Vince: Right... since I've never worked with a penciler the way Klaus worked with Frank, I've always tried to enhance the pencils. It's not easy. Pencil drawings often have a life and a charm that can't be captured in the inking. Pencils give an infinite range of grays and tones. An inkline is either there or it's not. Sometimes it's frustrating. There have been times when I've tried to give editors jobs back. I told them, "these pencils are beautiful. Get someone better to ink them!" But, they always insisted that I do them.

J.S.: *Who's your favorite penciler? And inker?*

Vince: I have favorites, but I'd rather not say. Every guy in the business is good in his own way. They're all pros. It's like baseball – not every player can be a Reggie Jackson, but each one has a reason to be here.

J.S.: *You helped a passel of people get started in the business, right?*

Vince: Michael Golden, Bill Sienkiewicz, Danny Bulanadi, Frank Miller, Marshall Rogers... and others. I forget...

J.S.: *Which of yours did you like best?*

Vince: I've inked a lot of stories in thirty-three years. Too many to single one out. But, I'll tell you about the best day in my whole career...

J.S.: *Okay, I'll bite...*

Vince: It was the day I came back to start working at Marvel again after being with another company for a while. I'll never forget the welcome I got here in the Bullpen... it was like coming home. I feel like I'm in the major leagues again. People *care* here, about each other and about the comics.

J.S.: *You're doing* Thor, Dazzler, *and* Crystar. *Plus, since everybody loved your work on* Dark Crystal *over Bret Blevins' pencils, you two are doing a Hulk Graphic Novel together, right?*

Vince: Right. I love doing the kind of artful, meticulous linework that Bret's pencils call for. I'm looking forward to that.

J.S.: *Me, too. Thanks, Vince!*

THAT'S IT!

Till next month when the Bullpen Bulletin returns to its usual non-interview format.

But, if you *like* the idea of reading your favorite Marvel creative peoples' answers to my occasionally intelligent questions, you'll find an interview in just about every edition of my *Bullpen Bulletin Special* which appears in all issues of *Moon Knight, Ka-Zar,* and *the Micronauts* which are on sale through subscription or at your local comics specialty shop. If you don't know where the comics shop nearest you is, write to me. I'll let you know.

Stay well.

Jim Shooter

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ **MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #99** — The **Thing,** and **Rom.**
- ☐ **TEAM AMERICA #12** — Double-sized *last issue!*
- ☐ **DAZZLER #26**
- ☐ **KA-ZAR #26** — Special wraparound *photo-cover*
- ☐ **NEW MUTANTS #3**
- ☐ **DAREDEVIL #194**
- ☐ **DARK CRYSTAL #2**
- ☐ **KING CONAN #16**
- ☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #240**
- ☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #281**
- ☐ **THOR #331**
- ☐ **GHOST RIDER #80**
- ☐ **MICRONAUTS #52**
- ☐ **MOON KNIGHT #31**
- ☐ **INDIANA JONES #5**
- ☐ **U.S. 1 #1** — An all new series of truckin' adventures, by AL MILGROM
- ☐ **CRYSTAR #1** — See Hype Box
- ☐ **KULL THE CONQUEROR #1**
- ☐ **SUPER VILLAIN CLASSICS #1** — See Hype Box
- ☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #283**
- ☐ **AVENGERS #231**
- ☐ **CONAN #146**
- ☐ **MARVEL TALES #151** — Reprints **Amazing Spider-Man #13** "The Menace of Mysterio!" by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO.
- ☐ **X-MEN #169**
- ☐ **ROM #42**
- ☐ **POWER MAN/IRON FIST #93**
- ☐ **G.I. JOE #11**
- ☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #254**
- ☐ **MARVEL TEAM-UP #129** — **Spider-Man and the Vision.**
- ☐ **IRON MAN #170** — See Hype Box
- ☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #78.**
- ☐ **DEFENDERS #119**
- ☐ **STAR WARS #71**
- ☐ **MASTER OF KUNG FU #124**
- ☐ **THE OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #5**

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #87**
- ☐ **CRAZY #94** — The last laugh: Crazy's *final issue!*
- ☐ **BLIP #2**
- ☐ **MARVEL AGE #2**
- ☐ **MARVEL FANFARE #8**
- ☐ **EPIC #17**

SPECIAL EVENTS

- ☐ **WARLOCK #6** — The *conclusion* of the Warlock saga!

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ **DREADSTAR #3**

THE HYPE BOX

SUPER VILLAIN CLASSICS #1 — For the first time ever in chronological order: the origin of the ultimate Marvel villain... Galactus! It's based on the original STAN LEE texts, expanded by editor MARK GRUENWALD, and the art is vintage JACK KIRBY- GEORGE KLEIN-VINCE COLLETTA material. All the fearsome facts about the world devourer — here! A worthy addition to any collection.

CRYSTAR #1 — Created by MARK GRUENWALD, RALPH MACCHIO, JIM SHOOTER, and JOHN ROMITA JR., the legendary kingdom of Crystalium is brought to full life by writer JO DUFFY, penciller BRET BLEVINS, and inker VINCE COLLETTS (remember Bret and Vince's *Dark Crystal*?). Once you enter this new realm of fantasy, you may never want to leave

IRON MAN #170 — As if the job DENNY O'NEIL, LUKE McDONNELL and STEVE MITCHELL have been doing on this mag in recent months wasn't fantastic enough, this issue heralds the beginning of a new era for the golden Avenger, as alcoholism renders Tony Stark incapable of functioning as Iron Man, and the responsibility of the famous armor falls — perhaps *forever* — to...ah, but that would be telling

LATER...

HOW'S YOUR JAW?

SORE, BUT AT LEAST IT'S NOT BROKEN.

MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

IT'S A PUBLIC PORCH.

HEY, CHEER UP, DANI. THINGS AREN'T THAT BAD, HONEST!

AFTER MIND-SCANNING US, THE PROFESSOR BELIEVED OUR STORY. HE'S BEEN BUSY ALL AFTERNOON, TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO LOCATE THE MONSTER.

WE WON TODAY'S BATTLE AND, WITH HIM LEADING US, WE'LL WIN THE WAR, TOO. IF I WERE THAT CREATURE, I'D START RUNNING.

IT'S A LONG WAY FROM BEATEN, 'BERTO. I CAN SENSE IT. OUT IN THE DARK SOMEWHERE, WATCHING, WAITING. IT'LL BE BACK.

AND I'M THE WEAK LINK THROUGH WHICH IT'LL STRIKE. EVEN THE PROFESSOR ISN'T SURE HE CAN SHIELD ME FROM ITS INFLUENCE.

MAYBE... IT'D BE BETTER IF I LEFT.

WHAT'LL THAT PROVE? WE'RE FRIENDS, DANI-- A TEAM--AND FRIENDS STICK TOGETHER. NO SLIMY GIANT INSECT IS GOING TO DRIVE THE NEW MUTANTS APART!

THANKS, PAL, I NEEDED THAT, A WHOLE LOT.

SO HOW COME YOU STILL SOUND SCARED?

THE BROODQUEEN KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT US--ASPECTS, POTENIALS OF MY POWER I NEVER DREAMED EXISTED, THINGS I FIGURE ONLY PROFESSOR XAVIER WOULD BE AWARE OF.

'BERTO, SUPPOSE *HE'S* INVOLVED-- UNDER THAT ALIEN'S CONTROL?

NOBODY'S THAT GOOD AN ACTOR.

LOOK, A SHOOTING STAR--I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE SO BIG OR SO BRIGHT. CONSIDER IT A GOOD OMEN.

IF YOU SAY SO. BUT, 'BERTO, WE'VE BEEN WITH THE PROFESSOR SO SHORT A TIME. HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT HE'S REALLY LIKE?

WE CROSS THAT RIVER WHEN WE COME TO IT, OKAY?

HEY, YOU GUYS, "*MAGNUM'S*" ON. YOU WATCHING IT WITH US OR WHAT?

*AND SO XAVIER'S STUDENTS BEGIN TO RELAX, UNAWARE THAT, IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, THEIR PREDECESSORS - THE UNCANNY X-MEN ARE ABOUT TO MAKE A SPECTACULAR RETURN HOME.**

* A TALE ALREADY TOLD IN *X-MEN* #167 - LOUISE

NEXT ISSUE: SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

WHO'S SCARING STEVIE?

MINUTEMEN

Quick STOP

RST